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TWENTY-THIRD PROGRESS REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN LIBERIA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1100 (1997) of 27 March 1997, by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) until 30 June 1997 and requested me to keep the Council informed on a regular basis of the situation in Liberia, and, in particular, of significant developments in the electoral process, and to submit a report by 20 June 1997. The report provides an update on developments in Liberia since my previous report dated 19 March 1997 (S/1997/237), and contains an assessment of the status of preparations for the forthcoming elections.

II. POLITICAL ASPECTS

2. Since my last report, the electoral process in the country has shown significant progress. The Liberian Independent Elections Commission, which is responsible for organizing and conducting the elections, was installed on 2 April 1997, while the reconstituted Supreme Court, which is to adjudicate in electoral disputes, was installed on 7 April, in each case about one month later than anticipated by the schedule set by the Committee of Nine of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These delays caused preparations for the elections to fall behind schedule, and cast serious doubt on prospects for holding credible elections by 30 May 1997, the date originally set.

3. UNOMIL and the Monitoring Group of ECOWAS (ECOMOG), however, have continued to make their own preparations for the elections. As explained in section IV below, UNOMIL civilian electoral observers have been deployed to all 13 counties of Liberia, and preparations are under way to deploy the 200 observers envisaged in my report of 19 March to observe the election itself. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has started repatriating those Liberians in the subregion who wish to return immediately to participate in the elections. Meanwhile, the implementation of bridging programmes has gathered pace and arrangements are being made to ensure that these programmes

are followed up by reintegration activities. At the same time, ECOMOG has continued to receive additional troops and to extend its presence, thus ensuring continued security and encouraging the civilian population to move freely throughout the country. ECOMOG deployment in areas along the borders with the neighbouring countries has also encouraged some refugees to return to those areas, albeit in small numbers.

4. Between 24 and 27 April, an ECOWAS assessment team led by the Foreign Minister of Nigeria, Chief Tom Ikimi, and comprising the Foreign Minister of Guinea, Mr. Lamine Camara, and the Deputy Foreign Minister of Ghana, Mr. Victor Gbeho, visited Liberia to evaluate the status of the electoral preparations. Following extensive consultations with the Liberian Council of State, the Independent Elections Commission, the registered political parties and UNOMIL, the assessment mission focused on the electoral package presented by the Elections Commission, consisting of a draft electoral law, a code of conduct for political parties, a calendar of electoral activities and a budget.

5. The assessment team made a number of decisions designed to underline ECOWAS determination to exercise close control over the electoral process. It decided to reduce the $9.5 million electoral budget proposed by the Elections Commission to $5.4 million, consisting of $4.7 million for the operational aspects and $700,000 for personnel costs.

6. Concerning the timetable for the elections, the Elections Commission requested the assessment team to reconsider the 30 May election date set under the Abuja Agreement (S/1995/742, annex), and indicated that 74 more days would be required in order to prepare adequately for the elections. The registered Liberian political parties also unanimously requested the ECOWAS team to extend the electoral schedule, many of them expressing a preference for postponing the elections until October 1997.

7. Having carefully reviewed the situation, UNOMIL also took the view that it would not be possible to hold credible elections on 30 May. Accordingly, on 1 May, I wrote to General Sani Abacha, Chairman of ECOWAS and Head of State of Nigeria, to express my concern that insufficient time was being allowed to complete the technical aspects of the election process and that a minimum of 70 days from the enactment of the electoral law would be required for that purpose. Taking note of the assessment team's decision that ECOWAS should assume greater responsibility for the physical and logistical aspects of the electoral process, including transportation and the procurement of electoral materials, I strongly emphasized the importance of early, detailed and meticulous planning by ECOWAS in carrying out those tasks. I also recalled the need to establish a joint coordination mechanism, as outlined in my report to the Security Council of 19 March, in order to ensure adequate coordination between the United Nations and ECOWAS in the preparation for the elections. I also wrote to the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to invite OAU to participate in the mechanism.

8. In a letter dated 5 May, the Chairman of ECOWAS apprised me of the outcome of the assessment mission and informed me that the assessment team had recommended a 30-day extension of the electoral calendar, on which he was consulting with other ECOWAS Heads of State with a view to taking the necessary

decision. He also stated that the assessment team had noted that a substantial number of refugees still remained outside the country and he renewed the call for the United Nations to facilitate the immediate return to Liberia.

9. On 6 and 13 May, informal consultations were held in New York with the participation of ECOWAS member States and major donors to discuss preparations for the proposed reconvening at the ministerial level of the Special Conference to Support the Peace Process in Liberia. At those consultations, a consensus emerged that security conditions in Liberia were conducive to the holding of elections and that the objective was to hold credible, free and fair elections at the earliest date that was technically feasible. It was recognized, however, that it was no longer technically feasible to hold elections on 30 May and that a credible electoral calendar needed to be established. The participants also agreed that it was in the interest of all to increase the flow of information and to improve coordination among all partners involved in preparations for the elections. Accordingly, my Special Representative, the mediation team and donor representatives in Monrovia established a standing committee to meet regularly in Monrovia to facilitate the resolution of the technical questions arising during the electoral preparations. In addition to representatives of UNOMIL and the concerned United Nations agencies, the standing committee comprises the Elections Commission and the members of the mediation team, that is, the Ambassadors of Guinea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the United States of America, as well as donor representatives. I informed the Chairman of ECOWAS of these developments in a further letter to him dated 9 May.

10. An Extraordinary Summit Meeting of the ECOWAS Committee of Nine on Liberia was convened in Abuja on 21 May to decide on the date of the Liberian elections, as well as on the electoral law and the budget. The Summit was preceded on 16 May by a Ministerial Meeting of the Committee of Nine and by consultations among the Chairman of ECOWAS, the leaders of the registered Liberian political parties, the signatories to the Abuja Agreement, and members of the Independent Elections Commission.

11. In the course of these consultations, the political parties proposed amendments to the draft electoral law to include the use of a single ballot for presidential and legislative candidates, and the counting of ballots at the polling stations rather than in a centralized location. The Summit Meeting approved the electoral law as amended by the political parties. It also approved the extension of the tenure of the Liberian Council of State, as presently constituted, until the inauguration of the new Government.

12. The Summit decided on an effective extension of the electoral schedule by some 60 days, that is, that the election for the legislative assembly and the presidency should take place on 19 July, with the new Government to be inaugurated on 2 August. However, should a run-off election for the presidency be necessary, it would be held on 2 August, with the inauguration of the new Government taking place on 16 August. The Summit also approved the reduced electoral budget of $5.4 million.

13. On 12 June, the Special Conference to Support the Peace Process in Liberia was reconvened in Geneva at the ministerial level, with the participation of concerned Ministers from the Netherlands (representing the European Union (EU)),

Liberia, Nigeria (on behalf of ECOWAS), Zimbabwe (representing OAU), Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, and under the chairmanship of the United Nations. Participants pledged in excess of $15 million in contributions to the Liberian peace process, including the electoral process, much of which has already been disbursed. In particular, the Government of Ghana pledged $300,000 for the elections; EU pledged $3.7 million to cover the priority items listed in the electoral budget; the Government of Japan announced that it was considering the possibility of leasing a helicopter to support the electoral process; the United States Government announced its contribution of $7.4 million for the electoral process and additional support for ECOMOG, including communications equipment and two additional helicopters for the peacekeeping force; the Government of Denmark will provide and transport ballot boxes and support the training of trainers; and OAU announced that it had donated $200,000 for the elections. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia announced that the Liberian National Transitional Government had so far disbursed $325,000 towards the administrative costs of the elections, as well as providing housing for the elections commissioners. The Governments of Belgium, Canada, Germany, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland announced that they would send at least three electoral observers each. Chief Ikimi expressed readiness to cooperate with the United Nations in a joint coordination mechanism. Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall, who chaired the Special Conference, has been discussing the modalities of the mechanism with Chief Ikimi. Proposals to reconvene the Special Conference, either before the elections or upon the installation of the new Government, are under discussion.

14. A total of 12 political parties that are expected to participate in the elections have registered with the Independent Elections Commission. These parties have been engaged in selecting their candidates for the presidential elections and some have established offices in various counties.

15. Mr. Anthony Nyakyi ended his assignment as my Special Representative for Liberia on 16 April 1997. He was succeeded by Mr. Tuliameni Kalomoh, who arrived in Monrovia on 28 April. I wish to pay tribute to Mr. Nyakyi for the excellent services he rendered in the cause of peace in Liberia, in particular for the important contribution he made to the achievements of UNOMIL.

III. MILITARY ASPECTS

Security situation

16. Relative peace and stability have continued to prevail throughout Liberia and the country is now considered secure enough for elections to take place nationwide. Although a few minor incidents have occurred in various parts of the country, ECOMOG has been able to control the security situation quickly and effectively in all cases.

Disarmament

17. Since the end of the official disarmament period on 9 February 1997, a total of 132 ex-fighters have disarmed voluntarily at Rivercess, Grand Kru and Grand Gedeh counties where disarmament could not take place earlier because of

the inaccessibility of these areas. As at 13 June, the cumulative total of arms and ammunition recovered and verified by military observers was 10,036 weapons and more than 1.24 million assorted pieces of ammunition, while approximately 3,750 weapons had been reported surrendered to ECOMOG outside the official disarmament sites. In addition, ECOMOG cordon-and-search operations have led to the recovery of approximately 3,500 weapons and 150,000 pieces of ammunition. Major recent recoveries include heavy artillery from Butlo in Nimba county, mortars and anti-tank guns from Lofa county and substantial quantities of small arms from Bong Mines, Buchanan, Monrovia, Tubmanburg, Bo Waterside and Voinjama.

ECOMOG and UNOMIL deployment

18. During the period under review, ECOMOG has continued to receive considerable reinforcements. In April, 320 troops from Burkina Faso, 321 from Niger and a 35-man medical team from Côte d'Ivoire arrived, with a further 250 troops from Benin joining ECOMOG in May. These reinforcements have brought ECOMOG strength to approximately 11,000 troops deployed at 48 different locations. Although some ECOMOG troops have been redeployed to Sierra Leone in connection with the crisis in that country, my Special Representative and the Chief Military Observer believe that ECOMOG at present retains sufficient capability to ensure security for the forthcoming elections in Liberia. UNOMIL also assisted in the evacuation of United Nations and other international personnel from Sierra Leone.

19. UNOMIL has completed its planned deployment at 16 sites, covering all the 13 counties of Liberia (see annex and map). The field stations established during the disarmament process have been successfully converted into electoral observation bases. Each of these bases is manned jointly by one or two civilian electoral observers and four or five military observers, who are continuing to undertake reconnaissance missions in the countryside to gather information on terrain and infrastructure and to identify population centres. This information has been made available to the Elections Commission for use in its planning for the forthcoming elections.

IV. ELECTORAL PROCESS

UNOMIL preparations for elections

20. As indicated in section II above, preparations for the Observer Mission's observation of the elections are on schedule. Its Electoral Unit has been strengthened to its full complement of four electoral officers. A total of 34 civilian electoral observers have joined the 78 military observers outside Monrovia to form medium-term electoral observer teams, which are operating from 16 observation bases in the field, and in Monrovia. In addition to the activities described above, the medium-term observer teams are reporting on the activities of political parties and preparing for the arrival of the additional observers to be deployed during the election itself. UNOMIL is also working with other observer groups to ensure that there will be efficient coordination of the electoral observation process. The UNOMIL communications network will be shared with electoral observers up to and during the polling period.

21. While earlier consultations had indicated that the vote count would be centralized, the electoral package approved in Abuja contained a provision for decentralized counting, to be conducted at polling centres. This increases the need for the "quick count" procedure, which I had stipulated in my last report as part of the verification of the counting process. For that purpose, I intend to recruit an expert consultant to the UNOMIL Electoral Unit for the period necessary to organize and conduct the "quick count" exercise.

22. The decision to decentralize counting also has an impact on the number of observers needed for the polling period. As noted in my last report, 200 observers will be deployed for the polling period. However, it was anticipated at that time that, should there be a presidential run-off election, an appropriate level of observation could be ensured by about 50 locally recruited international observers, thus reducing costs as far as possible. However, the decision to conduct counting at polling centres instead of at a central location will require the deployment of a larger number of observers. UNOMIL therefore proposes to deploy up to 200 observers for the run-off election, should one be required.

23. UNOMIL helicopters and vehicles are being shared with the Elections Commission to facilitate movement of personnel in the field. UNOMIL observation base personnel are assisting staff of the Independent Elections Commission in undertaking assessment missions and are providing transport, communications and general support. However, while UNOMIL assets are being deployed to assist the Commission, UNOMIL does not have the logistical capacity to act as the primary support mechanism for election operations. It will therefore provide technical expertise to the Elections Commission in the logistical planning stages, and coordinate with ECOMOG and the major donors in implementing the logistical plan for the elections.

24. The Public Information Unit of UNOMIL is helping to provide civic information on registration and voting to the Liberian electorate. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and USAID have provided some 5,500 non-battery shortwave radios, which are being distributed by the non-governmental organization Search for Common Ground to community centres, churches, schools and electoral observers in the Liberian hinterland, where there would otherwise be no access to the media. The voter information campaign also features a cartoon series stressing such issues as the secrecy of the vote. A newsletter on the electoral process is being published and a UNOMIL-originated radio programme is now being aired on Liberian radio stations.

25. UNDP has provided the services of a demographer and two electoral experts to assist in voter registration, voter education and the management of the electoral process. UNDP has also provided vehicles, computers, communications equipment and an electricity generator. The procurement of motorcycles and office supplies is under way.

Activities of the Independent Elections Commission

26. The Independent Elections Commission has completed the recruitment of about 80 per cent of the registration staff in Monrovia, to be complemented by local recruitment in the counties, which is now under way. It has also recruited and

trained the electoral magistrates, who are responsible for coordinating the elections at the regional level and for identifying premises for registration and polling centres. The Commission intends to establish magistrate's offices in each county, with additional offices to be headed by assistant magistrates at the sub-county level. The new magistrates and their staff have already been deployed in the counties with the assistance of UNOMIL and the International Foundation for Elections Systems.

27. The Elections Commission has held workshops with the political parties and the media in Monrovia to improve understanding of the electoral package and has set up an interparty committee to serve as a forum for political party liaison. The Commission has also established a series of committees to handle each aspect of the electoral process, bringing together international technical assistance staff at the working level.

28. The Independent Elections Commission has announced a revised electoral work plan, which includes the following:

29 May	Beginning of the civic education programme
9 June	Publication of provisional lists of parties/coalitions/alliances
16 June	Beginning of the electoral campaign
24 June	Beginning of voter registration
3 July	End of voter registration
11 July	Publication of the final voters' roll
18 July	End of the electoral campaign
19 July	Polling and counting
20 July	Announcement of the election results.

Coordination

29. The agreement of ECOWAS to take part in a joint electoral coordination mechanism with the United Nations, as announced at the Special Conference to Support the Peace Process in Liberia in Geneva on 12 June, will greatly assist in the harmonization of electoral preparations. In my last report, I identified four main tasks to be achieved through United Nations/ECOWAS joint coordination of the elections. The new procedures, which are now to be worked out between the United Nations and ECOWAS, will be essential for the performance of these tasks, that is, ensuring that operational requirements are met and that the electoral process remains on track; coordinating the deployment, logistics and security arrangements for international observers; identifying gaps and needs in the electoral process; and the joint certification of the election results.

Parameters for verification

30. I believe two main factors will determine whether the Liberian elections are free and fair. The first is the creation of a level playing field for the conduct of free and fair elections and the second is the efficiency and credibility of the organization and conduct of the elections by the Independent

Elections Commission. UNOMIL's assessment of the electoral process will therefore be based on the following parameters:

(a) Factors determining a free and fair electoral environment include continued security to facilitate freedom of movement and freedom from intimidation; the secrecy of the ballot; access by all political parties to the media, in particular to radio time; the credibility of the voter education campaign; the extent to which political parties are able to campaign in all areas; and freedom for people to join or refuse to join political parties;

(b) Operational benchmarks defining the work of the Independent Elections Commission include the timely setting up of functional regional offices; the timely procurement and delivery of the necessary materials; the timely and successful completion of voter registration; the establishment of sufficient numbers of polling sites, properly distributed to ensure adequate coverage of the voting population; the security of the ballot boxes and other sensitive materials; and the accuracy of the count.

Technical advice and assistance provided by donors

31. In addition to UNOMIL and UNDP, the European Commission and ECOWAS have provided technical and logistical assistance to the Independent Elections Commission. Technical advisers from these organizations work according to the Commission's requirements and currently assist the Commission in all aspects of its work. The International Foundation for Election Systems is assisting in the formulation and production of procedures governing registration and polling, materials design and procurement, as well as the provision of logistical support; the European Commission has provided headquarters offices and regional office support, as well as logistics support; ECOWAS has provided technical advice on a range of electoral issues; and Nigeria has made available vehicles at Commission headquarters for use by the commissioners.

V. HUMAN RIGHTS

32. During the period under review, UNOMIL has conducted a series of missions throughout Liberia in order to assess the general human rights situation. During those missions, no major violations of human rights have been confirmed. However, the Council of State has established a committee chaired by the Minister of Justice to investigate an incident in which a ceremony recently held by a group of Muslims visiting their homes in Bong county was disrupted by violence. UNOMIL is conducting an investigation into recent widely circulated allegations that one person was killed and others injured during a cordon-and-search operation undertaken by ECOMOG soldiers at the Lajoy gold mine in Grand Cape Mount county. I have requested my Special Representative to raise these allegations with ECOWAS.

33. The Liberian human rights community has been strengthened with the creation of at least four new human rights organizations, all of which collaborate with UNOMIL and function as members of the Liberia Human Rights Centre. The Centre has received a grant from a major international donor for setting up its offices and will commence programming shortly. In the interim, individual member

organizations continue to carry out a variety of programmes, monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation, hosting civic education seminars, workshops and radio broadcasts, providing legal aid services and monitoring the electoral process as it unfolds. Financial assistance from international donors to Liberian human rights organizations has been minimal and at best slow. UNOMIL has sought the cooperation of donors in rectifying this situation.

34. In pursuance of its capacity-building mandate, UNOMIL, in collaboration with a Member State, hosted a two-day seminar on 1 and 2 May for 55 representatives of Liberian human rights and related organizations. At the request of participants, additional seminars are planned as activities of the Liberia Human Rights Centre.

35. I am also aware of the statement made by the Chairman of the Commission for Human Rights at its fifty-third session, in which he urged the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat to provide, at the request of the Government of Liberia, advisory services and technical assistance to enable it to revive the ailing human rights structures and mechanisms. I intend to consult with the new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on ways and means of giving effect to the Commission's views.

VI. HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS

36. Following the completion of the disarmament and demobilization exercise and the deployment of ECOMOG to most parts of the country, relief organizations are now able to operate in all 13 counties of Liberia. At this time last year, populations at risk could only be reached in less than half of the counties.

37. While access has expanded, humanitarian needs have not decreased. Throughout the country, the humanitarian community is encountering damaged infrastructure and resident populations badly in need of the most basic assistance, that is, food, shelter, health, water and sanitation, education and agriculture. This continued need is reflected by the delivery by the World Food Programme (WFP) of 9,281 metric tons of food commodities to 644,729 beneficiaries during the reporting period. The United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Office reports that out of the 368 pre-war public and private health facilities, today only 25 per cent are functioning; the Monrovia water supply is operating at less than 10 per cent of its capacity; access to safe drinking-water in rural Liberia stands at less than 12 per cent; access to proper sanitation in rural Liberia stands at one per cent; and 60 per cent of children of school age are not in class. These are but a few examples of the persistent and urgent humanitarian needs in Liberia. A key humanitarian challenge is now also the repatriation of what UNHCR estimates to be 660,000 refugees in the subregion and the resettlement of 750,000 internally displaced persons. The onset of the rainy season is likely both to aggravate the humanitarian situation and to hinder access, as many newly opened roads may not withstand the rains.

38. The United Nations and non-governmental organizations are responding in their respective areas of expertise. Humanitarian activities have generally been of two types, of which the first comprises activities undertaken in

response to acute crises. The second type of intervention includes more forward-looking activities that meet immediate needs while preparing for rehabilitation activities. As the peace process continues to evolve positively, humanitarian activities will focus increasingly on facilitating the voluntary return home of the internally displaced and Liberian refugees. UNHCR continues to prepare for and facilitate voluntary repatriation and is planning to establish field offices in Vahun, Voinjama, Gbarnga, Zwedru and Harper to carry out protection and monitoring activities. Population returns have so far been sporadic. UNHCR has organized visits to Liberia by delegations of Liberian refugees to enable them to ascertain for themselves the conditions now prevailing in Liberia.

39. A United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for Liberia was launched in December 1996 requesting $31.2 million for priority humanitarian interventions. As at 1 June 1997, the appeal had only received some 20 per cent of the total requested. The appeal was due to expire on 30 June, but, given the continued need for humanitarian assistance just described and the lack of financial support, will be extended through the end of the year.

Bridging activities

40. Implementation of bridging activities continues and has now produced short-term employment or training opportunities for some 15,000 demobilized ex-combatants out of the 21,315 demobilized during the disarmament and demobilization exercise. A similar number of civilians have also been engaged by these community-based, labour-intensive projects, which cover a broad range of activities, including public works, support for small-scale quick-impact enterprises, strengthening of capacities and infrastructure in the health and education sectors, civic education, counselling and skills development.

41. The United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Office whose task is the overall coordination of bridging activities, has approved 47 projects of implementing partners, directly engaging approximately 10,000 ex-fighters and civilians. UNDP, through a project being carried out by the United Nations Office for Project Services, has undertaken 110 projects, focusing on public works, creating temporary jobs for also approximately 10,000 ex-fighters and civilians. An International Labour Organization (ILO) project, funded by UNDP, has initiated short-term training for more than 1,700 ex-fighters and civilians. The European Commission is also very active through its 128 micro-projects, 75 of which are ongoing, which have provided short-term employment for almost 8,000 ex-fighters and civilians. The African American Institute undertook a mission in early May that identified 40 high-ranking officers of the disbanded factions who will be offered short-term UNDP training scholarships. Furthermore, over 3,000 former child fighters are benefiting from activities supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children Fund (UK) and national non-governmental organizations.

42. The establishment of the bridging programmes was based on the need to keep ex-combatants gainfully occupied while reintegration programmes were being developed and thus contribute to the promotion of an environment conducive to sustained peace and the holding of elections. These objectives have already been largely achieved. It was projected that bridging activities would be

completed on 30 June, at which time reintegration programmes would enter into effect. Ongoing bridging activities will now be dovetailed into the reintegration programme. As indicated in section VII below, on 12 May UNDP approved $4.75 million to support the reintegration programme. Preparatory work is under way for the quick launching of the programme, which will inherit the resources and equipment of ongoing UNDP-funded bridging projects. UNDP and UNHCR have agreed to collaborate and, wherever feasible, to establish joint implementation units to assist the reintegration of returning refugees and internally displaced persons. A National Reintegration Steering Committee established by the Ministry of Planning on 25 March 1997 will form the cornerstone of the recovery process through a rural-based, non-targeted resettlement and reintegration programme over a two-year period.

VII. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS

Status of reintegration programmes

43. In December 1996, the United Nations system inter-agency programme for community reintegration and peace-building for Liberia, coordinated by UNDP, was launched jointly with and linked to the above-mentioned United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for Liberia. The programme is designed to lead to the resumption of the development process. So far there has been a very limited response from donors. However, UNDP has registered pledges from donors for cost-sharing resources in the amount of $3.04 million in support of reintegration activities and for bridging activities. These consist of $500,000 from the United States Government and $2.54 million from the Government of the Netherlands. UNICEF has received $2 million from EU for primary education and an additional $1 million from the United States Government for the reintegration of war-affected youth.

44. On 12 May, UNDP approved $4.75 million for reintegration activities. Efforts are under way to mobilize additional resources of $5.25 million to bring the resources available to the reintegration programme to about $10 million. However, this will still be much less than the $46.91 million called for in the inter-agency programme.

45. United Nations agencies are playing a key role in the restoration of capacity in public institutions that are considered critical for the reintegration and the recovery process. The Ministries of Planning and Economic Affairs, Agriculture, Health and Social Welfare, Commerce and Education, the Budget Bureau and local selected non-governmental organizations have received initial logistical support to make them functional again. UNDP is also promoting the return of expatriate nationals through its transfer of knowledge through expatriate nationals (TOKTEN) programme. A similar exercise in the field of health is being undertaken by the World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

Status of reconstruction efforts

46. Prior to the April 1996 crisis, a joint UNDP/World Bank team fielded a mission to Liberia at the request of the Government. The major objective of the

mission was to support national efforts in developing and implementing a realistic rehabilitation and recovery programme. The April 1996 crisis aborted the process, but it has now been reactivated.

47. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture have fielded nationwide assessment missions for the preparation of a national master plan for reintegration in agriculture.

VIII. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

48. In its report of 9 June 1997 to the General Assembly (A/51/504/Add.2), the Fifth Committee recommended the appropriation of $20,447,100 gross to be assessed at a monthly rate of $1,703,925 gross ($1,576,525 net) for the maintenance of UNOMIL for the period from 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998, subject to the extension of the mandate of UNOMIL by the Security Council.

49. Therefore, should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNOMIL, as recommended in section IX below, the cost of maintaining the Observer Mission during the extension period will be limited to the rates indicated above.

50. As at 31 May 1997, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNOMIL special account since the inception of the Mission amounted to some $17.6 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations on 31 May 1997 was some $1,694 million.

51. With regard to the Trust Fund for the Implementation of the Cotonou Agreement in Liberia, total contributions received as at 31 May 1997 amounted to some $25 million, with authorized expenditure totalling some $24.9 million.

IX. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

52. The peace process in Liberia is now approaching its culminating stage, the holding of free and fair elections for a new, democratically elected Government. It is a credit to all concerned that Liberia is proceeding towards the elections in a calm and peaceful atmosphere that has prevailed since the successful conclusion of the disarmament exercise in February.

53. Despite the time it has taken to arrive at this juncture, the timetable for the remaining phases of the process is uncomfortably tight. While I welcome the flexibility shown by the Summit Meeting of the ECOWAS Committee of Nine in Abuja in extending the electoral period, the extension falls short of the time that under normal circumstances would be needed to ensure the proper performance of all the technical processes involved. The electoral calendar established by the Liberian Independent Elections Commission, which bears the responsibility for the planning and conduct of the election, is a demanding one that will require the closest possible cooperation and coordination among all the actors involved.

54. While I am heartened that evidence of such close cooperation does exist, there is still much to be done. The Special Conference to Support the Peace

Process in Liberia, which reconvened on 12 June in Geneva, has played an invaluable role in bringing together donors, ECOWAS countries and UNOMIL and the United Nations agencies to resolve some persistent questions of coordination and funding. I note with great appreciation the outcome of the 12 June meeting of the Conference and express my gratitude to the Ministers and others who attended, and to the donors who announced pledges. In particular, I welcome the announcement by Chief Tom Ikimi of the intention of ECOWAS to cooperate with the United Nations in the creation of a joint coordination mechanism to harmonize the preparation for and conduct of the elections. This mechanism will enable the United Nations and ECOWAS to speak with one voice in certifying the results of the elections, thus helping to consolidate the new Government that emerges.

55. At present, logistical resources in Liberia are not sufficient to support all the activities associated with the electoral process. In particular, helicopter transportation and, at the county level, vehicles and communications equipment, are lacking. The provision of adequate helicopter transportation in preparation for the elections is essential. Airborne transportation is all the more important in that the elections will be taking place in the middle of the rainy season, at a time when many roads will be impassable and communities cut off by flooding. In this context, I renew my appeal to donors to make further contributions as appropriate, either to ECOMOG or to the United Nations Trust Fund for Liberia.

56. I express my gratitude to UNOMIL for its efforts in the evacuation of United Nations and other international personnel from Freetown. I am deeply concerned at the potential adverse impact of developments in Sierra Leone on the situation in Liberia and will keep the situation there under close review.

57. The calm that has prevailed in Liberia for the past few months, and for which full credit must be given to ECOMOG and its Force Commander, Major-General Victor Malu, cannot be taken for granted. In particular, the possibility of unrest during or after the elections, especially if the results are hotly contested, cannot be ruled out. There is also provision for the conduct of a run-off for the presidency, which, if required, will take place on 2 August and would be followed by the installation of the new Government on 16 August. I believe UNOMIL should remain in Liberia at its current strength until that date in order to continue to demonstrate the commitment of the international community to the peace process in Liberia, and would therefore recommend to the Security Council that the mandate of UNOMIL be extended for a final three-month period until 30 September 1997. In the meantime, I intend to continue to keep the Council fully informed of all important developments in Liberia, especially during and immediately following the elections, with particular reference to the freeness, fairness and credibility of the elections and any changes that might arise in the security situation.

58. The departure of UNOMIL, which I would envisage commencing shortly after the installation of the new Government, will not mean the end of United Nations involvement in Liberia. Indeed, it will be important for the international community to continue to support the democratic and development processes in that country. In addition to the development work that will be continued by the United Nations agencies, I envisage that, subject to the agreement of the incoming Government, the United Nations might maintain a small political office

in Monrovia for a limited period to be agreed upon with the incoming Government and subject to the concurrence of the Security Council. Such a presence would contribute to promoting stability in Liberia as the elected Government consolidates its authority and assumes its responsibilities.

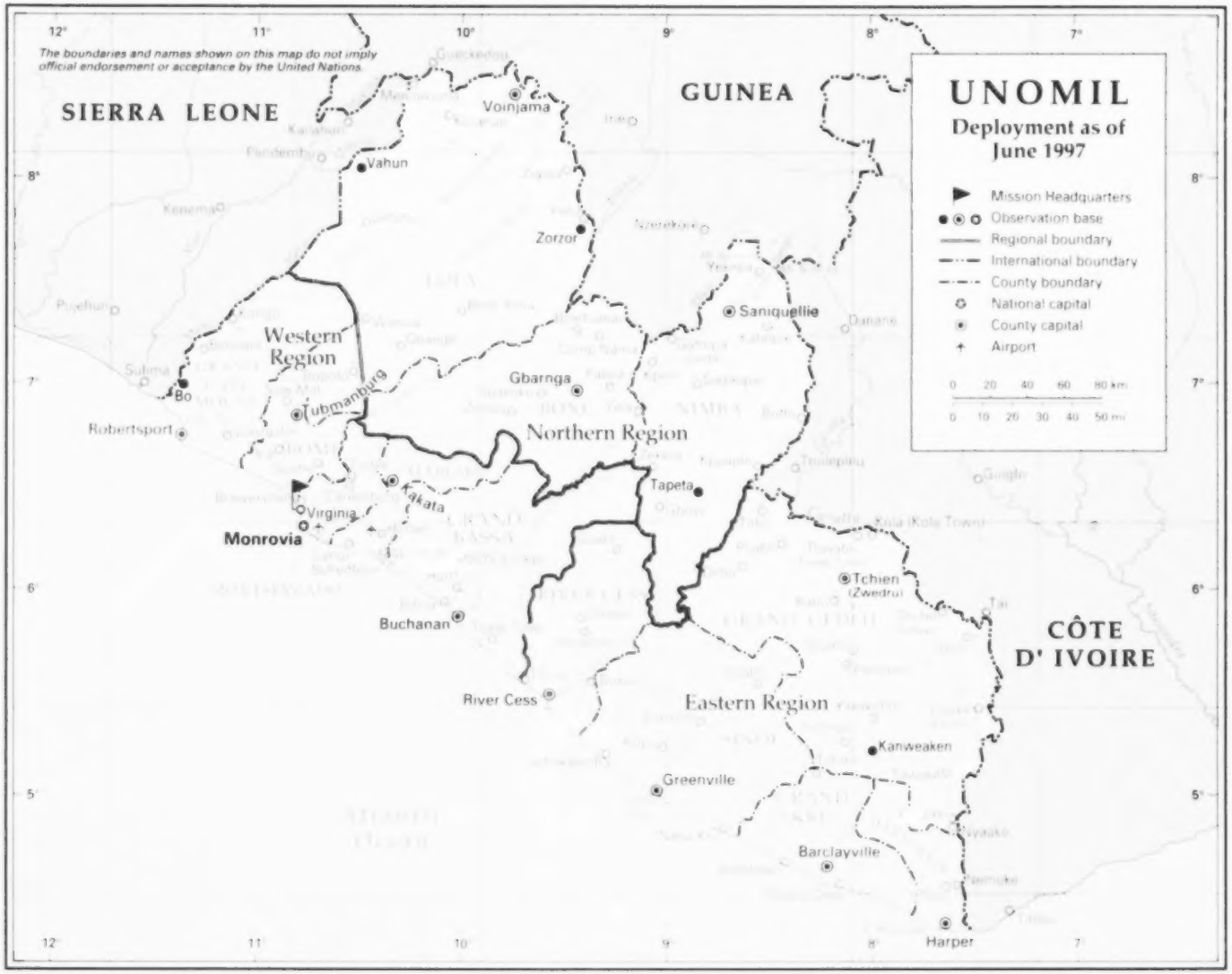
Annex

Composition of the military component of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia as at 15 June 1997

	Military observers	Others[a]	Total
Bangladesh	7	7	14
China	7	–	7
Czech Republic	5	–	5
Egypt	14	–	14
India	14	–	14
Kenya	13	–	13
Malaysia	3	–	3
Nepal	6	–	6
Pakistan	15[b]	–	15
Uruguay	2	-	2
Total	86	7	93

[a] Medical staff.

[b] Includes the Chief Military Observer.



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